

JOB CORPS

PARTNERSHIPS THAT WORK



Region IV

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Talking Leaves Takes Challenge Cup Home!

Congratulations to the Talking Leaves Academic Olympics Team for winning the Challenge Cup at the 2004 Academic Olympics. From November 29 through December 2, 2004, five students from Talking Leaves Job Corps competed in the 17th Annual Region IV Academic Olympics in San Antonio, Texas. The students competed against 22 other centers in the areas of Language Arts, Social Studies, Science, Math, and Oratory. Students from Talking Leaves were: Veronica Martinez, Language Arts; Olivia Martinez, Social Studies; Christian Cowan, Science; Clifton

Johnson, Math; and Justin Smith, Oratory. Olivia Martinez was the first place winner in her competition and received a \$1,500.00 scholarship which she will use to further her education upon completion of the Job Corps program. The team finished third in team competition but came in first overall. The traveling Silver Challenge Cup has returned to Talking Leaves for the third time in seven years. This cup is presented each year to the team amassing the most point during competition. In addition to the trophies, the team was given a digital camera/camcorder with which to

record their travels back to Oklahoma and the celebration held on center upon their return.

Preparation for the competition was very intense and comprehensive. The team began studying for the competition in September and worked evenings and weekends in addition to daily class time preparing for this event. In addition to the competition areas, they were also required to be knowledgeable of social skills and current events of 2004 as bonus questions during team competition came from this area.

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Albuquerque Takes First in Team Competition

The Albuquerque Job Corps Center Academic Olympic team returned triumphantly from their sojourn to San Antonio last month. Comprised of five students and two staff members, the team competed at the 17th Annual Region IV Academic Olympics in San Antonio, Texas, held November 29 through December 2, 2004. The winning team members were: Danielle Armstrong, Logan Hendrix, Mark Sattler, Elisen Poor, and Evander Black. They were coached by Penny Mortier and Donna Best, Albuquerque Job Corps instructors.

The team was first met by staff

and students at the airport and then escorted to the Escalera room for a congratulatory reception. Food and a toast (with sparkling cider) ensued. The very proud Center Director, Ms. Teresa Larson, gave them a big surprise by giving each member the Center Director's Award for December!

GO A-J-C-C!!!

When asked about their experience, several team members said it was the best time they have ever had. Danielle Armstrong expressed her appreciation of the Job Corps program and the opportunities the Albuquerque Center and staff have

given her, the competition and trip being the best by far.

The team member's individual prizes were:

Danielle Armstrong:

5th place in Oratory.

Elisen Poor:

3rd place in Literature.

Logan Hendrix:

5th place in Science.

Mark Sattler:

4th place in Social Studies.

Evander Black:

Finished in the top third in the Math competition.

JOB CORPS ACADEMIC OLYMPICS SPECIAL EDITION!

Recurring features do not appear in this issue due to space limitations. Previously submitted articles and regular features will return in subsequent issues. Please continue to submit your articles and information to: Arla A. de Hoyos, Regional CDSS Administrative Assistant, 922 South Alamo, San Antonio, Texas 78205, phone 210.226.2827, fax 210.226.6827, or email RLla@cuttingedgesa.com by Wednesday, March 2, 2005.



Employment and
Training Administration

JOB CORPS News

AWAKENINGS – Little Everyday Miracles You Can Touch

By Dean Christopher



I don't know about you, but miracles always lift up my spirits and recharge my batteries. Not necessarily spectacular miracles like sea-partings or blazing bushes. Ordinary everyday miracles will do – like the miracle of young people awakening to wider self-awareness; to previously unsuspected values in the people and things around them; to capabilities they never dreamed they possessed.

Job Corps staffers create such “awakening” miracles every day. Your reward? The thrill of seeing that sudden light in students’ eyes, observing the joyful contagion of pass-along awakenings. Each individual awakening is a little miracle. And little miracles can trigger big miracles, just as acorns stirring under the soil can eventually become mighty oaks.

For some years now I’ve been fortunate enough to participate in a miracle called *Academic Olympics*. Since you’re reading the *Region IV Newsletter*, you probably already know about it. Indeed, some of you may have been at the most recent *Olympics* in San Antonio. My hope is that you, too, returned home with recharged batteries and uplifted spirits.

This year’s event was truly remarkable, astonishingly free of glitches, considering the ambitious scale of the program – the regional expansion from 15 to 24 centers, all present and almost all actively participating.

For the first time this year, the students were “smarter than the questions.” This suggests that *Job Corps* instructors and coaches did excellent work preparing the students.

Scores that guaranteed a finalist’s berth just three years ago resulted in several fine teams coming up empty. Individuals racked up the greatest number of perfect scores in the 17-year history of the games, including the tough Math category. More than one finals runoff pitted perfect scorers against other perfect scorers! The post-competition entertainment – all provided by professional-level *Job Corps* students – emphatically showed (if the many standing ovations were any indication!) the power of your program to foster cross-cultural appreciation.

A Lesson From the Past

“Education is a danger... Every educated person is a future enemy!” wrote Nazi leader Martin Bormann (1900-1945) to his wife.

The Nazis – like all fanatics – feared education for good reason. An educated population is equipped to see through the kind of simplistic racism and “patriotic” chest-thumping that brought the Nazi party to power in 1933, and kept them there for twelve brutal years – at a terrible cost not only to Germany, but to all humanity.

There is a demonstrable relationship between an educated, literate people and a peaceful, prosperous people. Conversely, the more “dumbed-down” a society is, the more likely it is to be economically wobbly, and subject to internal turmoil and external aggression.

The world is very different today than it was 40 years ago when *Job Corps* was founded. America’s challenges have morphed into something dangerously darker. So *Job Corps* can no longer afford merely to help poor kids get jobs. Students’ long-term happiness and prosperity will henceforth depend upon much

more than just “making money.” Making wise life choices – including informed voting decisions – is even more critical in today’s world.

An educated workforce – drawn from an educated citizenry – is central to maintaining America’s economic health. Industry and infrastructure are the marrow of our national defense. We need a renewable supply of skilled, literate people building, making, maintaining, supporting, and creating. Our ultimate victories will come – as before – not through military force alone, but from our robust, diversified economy and culturally diverse society.

That’s why *Academic Olympics* is so important. It highlights the importance of “grass roots” cultural literacy. Sure, vocational training is essential for the students’ survival and success. But academic education and cultural enrichment are *the ultimate tools for lifelong empowerment* in the society beyond the workplace – where we all spend most of our lives.

We may have little power to affect the choices and behavior of the rest of the world. But we can, and we must, shape our own society as best we can, according to our highest values. This is the America that *Job Corps* is helping to shape, one little miracle at a time.

Each of those little miracles comes from the personal awakenings you bring about; humble everyday miracles that – although unsensational, unreported by the media – are real enough to reach out and touch.

So reach out. Touch them. Hold them close in your heart. And sleep well tonight, friend, knowing that every day you are uplifting spirits other than your own, recharging the batteries of one nation, indivisible.

Continued from page 1 – Talking Leaves Takes Challenge Cup Home!

Each center’s team is required to raise money each year to contribute to the scholarship fund which is held in trust at the Texas Education Foundation. The Talking Leaves team and their coaches would like to thank the following for their assistance in raising the money: Kiwanis of Tahlequah, Lions Club,

Soroptimist International, and Talking Leaves Student Government Association.

The coaches for the Talking Leaves team are Debbie Davis, High School Instructor, and Rose Coon, GED Instructor. Sueann Freeman, Academic Supervisor, also accompanied the team to San Antonio.

Talking Leaves *Job Corps* staff and students are extremely proud of these young people and their dedication to the program. The theme of the *Academic Olympics* was “It’s Cool To Be Smart” and the Talking Leaves team demonstrated that they, indeed, believe this is true.

JOB CORPS News

Gary's Academic Olympics Team Wins Second Place

The Gary Job Corps Academic Olympics team returned to San Marcos, Texas, a tad bloody but certainly not bowed – nor empty handed.

The Gary team was second overall, losing by a single point to the Talking Leaves team from Oklahoma. In the individual placings, Gary's Roberto Rodriguez-Valencia brought home the Math laurels along with a \$1,500 scholarship to help with his college expenses.

Chandler Poston won second place in the Social Studies competition, and Bobby Baldwin was fourth in the Oratory section. Christopher Powell and Bianca Cortez competed in the Science and Language Arts

competitions respectively.

In all, 23 Dallas region Job Corps centers competed in this annual event, held last November at the Hyatt Regency Hotel, in San Antonio.

"We are proud of our team and know they did their very best in rising to meet strong competition," says Gary Center Director Curtis Price, Jr.

Roberto Rodriguez-Valencia also noted that the competition was stiff. "I am very glad I won the math section," he says, "but it wasn't easy. I had to work hard to win. But the experience was great and I wouldn't have missed it for anything."

The Gary team was coached by instructors Caty Partin and Hoddar Gharib, two seasoned Academic Olympics participants, another instructor, Diane Eby, and two student coaches, Mandy Reynolds and Krystle McGlothlin.

"It's always hard when you lose," says Caty Partin, "but when it is by two points, then it's harder still. However, we came in second overall, and we are proud of that, along with our students' individual achievements. Now we are looking ahead to this year's Academic Olympics."

Gary took overall winners' titles in 1996, 1997, 1998, and 2000.

David L. Carrasco Academic Olympics Team!

The David L. Carrasco Academic Olympics team took fourth place in the Region IV Academic Olympics competition. The tournament was held in San Antonio the week of November 29, where 23 centers from the region competed against each other.

The five-member team and their two coaches had been preparing for eleven months. Team members exhibited their knowledge of science, math, social studies, language arts, and oratory skills. In the indi-

vidual competitions, Carlos Parra placed fifth in math, as did Andrew Perea in science; Ashley Rodriguez ranked fifth in language arts and José Hernández took third in social studies.

According to Director of Academic Education, Rita Fuentes, "Our center was the only one that had a team member in each individual competition." She added, "I am extremely proud of this team and how well they worked together and supported one another."

The center's Ballet Folklórico dance troupe was chosen to perform during the Victory Banquet. Gabriel Alvarez also was asked to sing during the celebration. The center was one of two in the region asked to send two students to work with a professional media company to document the events of the competition. Jesus Acosta and Zachary Boston accompanied the team and entertainment students to San Antonio to videotape and photograph the activities.



Congratulations to All the 2004 Academic Olympics Winners!

Challenge Cup Winner - Talking Leaves Job Corps

Overall Team Competition

- 1st Place: Albuquerque Job Corps
- 2nd Place: Gary Job Corps
- 3rd Place: Talking Leaves Job Corps
- 4th Place: David L. Carrasco Job Corps
- 5th Place: Guthrie Job Corps

Language Arts

- 1st Place: Jessica Walton, Guthrie Job Corps
- 2nd Place: Jenesia Tuggle, Shreveport Job Corps
- 3rd Place: Elisen Poor, Albuquerque Job Corps
- 4th Place: Jennifer Hoxworth, Clearfield Job Corps
- 5th Place: Ashley Rodríguez, David L. Carrasco Job Corps

Social Studies

- 1st Place: Olivia Martínez, Talking Leaves Job Corps
- 2nd Place: Chandler Poston, Gary Job Corps
- 3rd Place: José Hernández, David L. Carrasco Job Corps
- 4th Place: Mark Sattler, Albuquerque Job Corps
- 5th Place: Monica Blair, Shreveport Job Corps

Math

- 1st Place: Roberto Rodríguez-Valencia, Gary Job Corps
- 2nd Place: Clifton Johnson, Talking Leaves Job Corps
- 3rd Place: Josh Szaska, Anaconda Job Corps
- 4th Place: Sierra Garcia, Guthrie Job Corps
- 5th Place: Carlos Parra, David L. Carrasco Job Corps

Science

- 1st Place: Keith Smith, Guthrie Job Corps
- 2nd Place: Samantha Cooper, New Orleans Job Corps
- 3rd Place: Andrew Perea, David L. Carrasco Job Corps
- 4th Place: Christian Cowan, Talking Leaves Job Corps
- 5th Place: Logan Hendrix, Albuquerque Job Corps

Oratory

- 1st Place: Roxanne Thompson, New Orleans Job Corps
- 2nd Place: Reuben Breedan, Clearfield Job Corps
- 3rd Place: Justin Smith, Talking Leaves Job Corps
- 4th Place: Bobby Baldwin, Gary Job Corps
- 5th Place: Danielle Armstrong, Albuquerque Job Corps



Other Centers Making Their Mark at the 2004 Region IV Academic Olympics

Guthrie Job Corps

Guthrie Job Corp Center participated in the Regional Academic Olympics competition the week of November 28, 2004. The center's team consisted of Michael Claunts, Social Studies; Sierra Garcia-Jordan, Math; Jessica Hooten, Speech; Keith Smith, Science; and Jessica Walton, Language Arts. Team sponsors were Ms. Donna Betchan, Academics Manager, and Mr. Ted Lausen, instructor and coach. Guthrie Job Corps Center received two scholarship awards for Keith Smith (Science) and Jessica Walton (Language Arts). The team also had a fourth place winner in the Math competition and a fifth place team finish. Both sponsors expressed high praise to the team on their ability to stay focused and for their overall performance. Several trainees and management staff greeted the team at the airport and presented flowers and balloons to each one. Ms. Garcia-Jordan stated that her participation in the Academic Olympics was the best experience of her life. She has completed and returned to Texas where she is pursuing training in Cosmetology. Mr. Claunts stated he came to GJCC as a "burger-flipper with no GED," and now realizes his future is open to whatever he wants to achieve. Currently he is considering joining the army. Ms. Walton was a scholarship winner in Language Arts, and her comments were "the hard work on each person's part paid off." She plans to use her scholarship to further her education at Langston University and work to obtain a degree in Political Science. Mr. Smith earned a scholarship in Science; he has completed the program and enlisted into the Army. Later he plans to use his scholarship to help earn a bachelor's degree. All of GJCC is very proud of the teamwork and accomplishments of the 2004 Olympic Academics Team and commends the region for their efforts to recognize the talent of these young men and women.

New Orleans Job Corps

The New Orleans Job Corps Center is enjoying another Academic Olympics success story. This year's team was comprised of

the following trainees; Veronica Brown, Samantha Cooper, Tamara Marioneaux, Marquis Perkins, Roxanne Thompson, and Shira White (coach). Success began prior to the competition in that these trainees studied and prepared for many months. They had to compete for a spot on the team, and once that hurdle was jumped, they became a cohesive, inseparable team working diligently to claim victory in San Antonio. The team placed sixth in the overall competition. Team member Samantha Cooper placed second in the individual competition after an exhausting, yet exhilarating, round of more than 90 questions. Oratorical competitor Roxanne Thompson continued the sweet taste of victory for New Orleans by winning first place in the oratorical category. Roxanne impassioned shared her experience of how Job Corps has changed her life and will use the scholarship to reach her goal of becoming a nurse. She will attend the Delgado Community College/Charity Hospital School of Nursing in New Orleans.

Quentin Burdick Job Corps

This was the first time in over five years that Burdick had the opportunity to participate in Academic Olympics – and what an opportunity! The Burdick team gave it a good shot, and it was an experience that our students and coaches will never forget. It was a learning experience for the students even before we arrived in Texas – the competing with their peers on center for positions and practice, the hours of studying, and even the planning and organizing of the trip were lessons in organization for the students. Once in Texas, the event gave them an opportunity to show off their academic talents and they had the entire student body at Burdick watching them "live" and rooting for them. Of the five students on the team, two had never been out of North Dakota, one had only been to a neighboring state, three had never flown before, and not one of them has been to another Job Corps center or met students from another Job Corps center. For them, the real excitement began with the plane ride, and then as a bonus they had an opportunity to experience a big city,

San Antonio, which is filled with some of the very history they had been studying. The event was a learning experience for the coaching staff as well. We learned how the Olympics are conducted, how we should plan for next year, and most importantly, we had the opportunity to experience all of the excitement through the eyes of our students. Plans for next year were underway before the event was over, and we believe that we will be prepared and more than ready for the competition.

Treasure Lake Job Corps

Treasure Lake's Academic Olympic team returned from the competition in San Antonio with a wealth of experience to share with their fellow students. At an awards assembly held on December 10, the students modeled their business attire, shared stories about the trip, and oratory competitor Amanda Phillips gave her speech. Each team member and coach received certificates of appreciation for representing the center at the regional event. Rose Mary Kern, Center Director, told the student body, "This group represented our center very positively in their behavior and their efforts." While no one in the group came home with awards, they did return with pride in their team and congratulations for their fellow Oklahoma Job Corps Academy members from Talking Leaves and Guthrie who took top honors at this outstanding competition.

Tulsa Job Corps

On Sunday, November 28, 2004, the Tulsa Academic Olympic Team headed for Olympic success at the Job Corps Region 4 Academic Olympics XVII, located in San Antonio, Texas. The Tulsa team consisted of Manual Payne-Math, Robert Loveless – Alternate, Dreamis Burton – Social Studies, Chrystal Tate – Science, and Jennifer Brassell – Language Arts & Speech. Even though the Tulsa Team put forth an outstanding effort and demonstrated their exceptional academic knowledge, they unfortunately didn't place. However, they walked away with great educational and traveling experiences and memories.